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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 000602

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STATE FOR EUR/NCE, EUR/RUS, PM/RSAT FOR DOWLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/01/2016

TAGS: MARR MOPS PREL EZ GG RU

SUBJECT: CZECHS VIEW RUSSIAN ACTIONS IN SOUTH OSSETIA WITH SUSPICION

REF: STATE 80908

Classified By: Acting Political Economic Counselor Karen Reider for reasons

1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Poloff May 31 delivered reftel demarche on Russian action in South Ossetia to Vaclav Balek, Deputy Director of the MFA Security Policy Division. Balek replied that the Czechs had drawn similar conclusions. According to Balek, the EU is currently discussing how to address its approach, perhaps to explore a role as an alternative to the OSCE in the region. Balek reiterated the Czech position that Russia must respect the Istanbul Commitments but added that the Czechs are also concerned about the willingness of the Georgians to use controversial issues to deliberately inflame Russia. He said Georgia's pursuit of NATO's membership was an example of a tool that Georgia seemed to use to provoke the wrong reaction from Moscow.

CABANISS